

Message Text

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ACTION CU-06

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P R 230909Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2109
CINCPAC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 3006

USIAC

E.O. 11652: NA
SUBJ: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS - FEBRUARY 17-23

FOR: SECSTATE EA/PHL; CU/EA
USIA/IEA
CINCPAC - USIA ADVISOR

I. PSYCHOLOGICAL

ELECTORAL BATTLE LINES WERE FINALIZED THIS WEEK WITH THE OFFICIAL LISTS OF CANDIDATES MADE PUBLIC. THERE WERE NO GREAT SURPRISES, THE CAMPAIGN OFFICIALLY OPENED WITH AN EXPECTED FLURRY OF RHETORIC.

WHILE STILL EARLY, SOME TRENDS ARE EVIDENT. THE PRESS, NOTABLY THE DAILY EXPRESS, IS PIOSLY PROCLAIMING ITS INTENTION TO PROVIDE FULL AND BALANCED COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN. THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THUS FAR TO SUPPORT THIS CONTENTION AS THE OPPOSITION HAS BEEN GIVEN FAR LESS THAN AN EVEN BREAK IN THE EXTENT OF COVERAGE AND PLACEMENT.

ANOTHER TREND IS OBVIOUS IN THE PRESS, ONE SPEARHEADED BY SEVERAL OF THE OLD WARHORSE POLITICAL COLUMNISTS: A CAMPAIGN TO PROJECT THE US AS INVOLVED IN THE ELECTIONS AND VERY DIFINITELY ON THE SIDE OF THE OPPOSITION. FOR EXAMPLE, HAVING NOTED THE EXISTENCE OF AN "AMERICAN PRESENCE" IN THE PROCESS, TODAY'S UNCLASSIFIED

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EXPRESS COMMENTS, "WHAT IS DISCONCERTING IS THE NAGGING FEELING THAT AMERICAN SYMPATHY, IF NOT SUPPORT, IS NOW APPARENTLY BEING THROWN BEHIND THE OPPOSITION." IT IS NOT CLEAR AS YET WHETHER THIS IS OFFICIAL POLICY NOR HOW MUCH MILEAGE CAN BE EXPECTED FROM IT. HOPEFULLY, NOT MUCH.

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS IMPOSED CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON USIS PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE PRESS

EFFORT TO GIVE THE US A ROLE. IN SEEKING A FILIPINO COUNTERPART TO SHARE THE ROSTRUM WITH THE AMERICAN SPEAKER IN ONE OF THE POSTS ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE SEMINARS, WE WERE FORCED TO REJECT AT LEAST ONE EXCELLENT INDIVIDUAL SINCE HE WAS A CANDIDATE AND HIS APPEARANCE WAS BOUND TO ATTRACT MEDIA ATTENTION. THERE WILL LIKELY BE MORE SUCH INSTANCES OF RESTRAINT.

II. SECRETARY BROWN'S SPEECH

SECRETARY BROWN'S POSTURE STATEMENT, TOGETHER WITH HIS HONOLULU PRESS CONFERENCE, WAS TIMELY AS WELL AS SOLID SUPPORT FOR OUR SECURITY THEME. LOCAL INTEREST WAS INDICATED BY PROMINENT COVERAGE IN ALL NEWSPAPERS, MOST OF THEM RUNNING LONG WIRE SERVICE REPORTS, INCLUDING GENEROUS QUOTATIONS FROM THE SPEECH. IN COOPERATION WITH THE DAO, WE ARE MAKING SELECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF BOTH THE STATEMENT AND THE PRESS CONFERENCE TO DEFENSE/SECURITY/MEDIA AND ACADEMIC AUDIENCES. IN ADDITION, IT WILL GO TO THE VARIOUS MILITARY LIBRARIES AND TO MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. THE POSTURE STATEMENT WAS ESPECIALLY TIMELY SINCE THE AMBASSADOR IS SCHEDULED TO SPEAK ON THIS SUBJECT TO THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION EARLY NEXT MONTH AND USIS IS ASSISTING WITH THAT PRESENTATION.

III. SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

1. MORE ON HUMAN RIGHTS -- THE AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH ON HUMAN

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RIGHTS CONTINUES TO ATTRACT EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE FROM SELECTED ARS GROUP MEMBERS TO WHOM THE TEXT WAS SENT. AND YET ANOTHER PROGRAM IN THIS AREA, THIS ONE FEATURING VOLSPKR DR. WALTER HUGINS AND PHILIPPINE CO-PANELIST SALVADOR ROXAS-GONZALES, ATTRACTED A LARGE AND SUBSTANTIVE AUDIENCE TO TJCC. ATTENDANCE OF WELL OVER 100, INCLUDING SCHOLARS AS WELL AS SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT FIGURES ON MANILA'S HUMAN RIGHTS SCENE, CARRIED ON THE DISCUSSION FOR MORE THAN ONE AND A HALF HOURS. COMMENTS INDICATED THAT AMONG PARTICIPANTS THERE IS BROAD AGREEMENT THAT HUMAN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY POLITICAL RIGHTS, ARE ESSENTIAL IN CIVILIZED SOCIETIES. THE OFT REPEATED THIRD WORLD THEME PLACING ECONOMIC CONCERNS BEFORE SUCH RIGHTS WAS RARELY MENTIONED IN THE VERY PRODUCTIVE AND STIMULATING DISCUSSION.

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (T E X T)

2. SENATOR SCOTT FINISHES TOUR -- SENATOR SCOTT'S TWO-AND-A-HALF DAYS IN MANILA INVOLVED A CALL ON PRESIDENT AND MRS. MARCOS, A WELL-ATTENDED DISCUSSION ON THE ROLE OF CONGRESS IN MAKING US FOREIGN POLICY, AND A DINNER IN THE SENATOR'S HONOR, WHICH ALSO SPOTLIGHTED THE PHILIPPINE FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION, A PRIMARY POST OBJECTIVE.
THE SENATOR AND MRS. SCOTT, ACCCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR AND MRS. NEWSOM, SUCCEEDED IN REMINDING THE PRESIDENT OF PAEF'S UPCOMING 30TH ANNIVERSARY BUT DID NOT GET TO MENTION FURTHER FULBRIGHT COST SHARING BY THE RP. AT HIS TJCC SPONSORED PROGRAM, THE SENATOR CONCERNTRATED MORE ON HOW THE US CONGRESS WORKS THAN ON CONGRESSIONAL INPUT INTO ECONOMIC POLICY. DESPITE THIS SHIFT IN STRESS, HE WAS EFFECTIVE IN ILLUSTRATING CONGRESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE VALUE OF "CHECKS AND BALANCES" IN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE. THE AMBASSADOR'S ATTENTION TO PAEF, THROUGH INVITING THE ENTIRE BOARD TO THE DINNER HONORING SENATOR SCOTT, WAS A SIGNIFICANT BOOST FOR THAT ORGANIZATION AS MAS "30TH" CELEBRAPSON NEARS.

3. A SATISFIED CUSTOMER -- RECENTLY RETURNED VOLUNTARY VISITOR, BENITO LIM OF THE PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR ADVANCED

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STUDIES, SUBMITTED A 3-PAGE, IN-DEPTH WRAP-UP OF HIS RECENT VISIT TO VARIOUS CALIFORNIA INSTITUTIONS.
LIM WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED THAT HIS MEETINGS WITH INDIVIDU PS HHZUGGESTD BY THE POST IN VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH CENTERS WERE SO EFFICIENTLY HANDLED AND, CONSEQUENTLY, PRODUCTIVE. HIS RECEPTIN BY VARIOUS SCHOLARS WITH WHOM HE MET WILL ALSO SERVE AS GUIDANCE TO THE POST IN REQUESTING FUTURE

SUCH PROGRAMS.

4. SEE SECTION II ABOVE FOR AACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH
SENATOR BROWN'S SPEECH ON US POLICY IN ASIA.

VISITOR

DEPUTY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PERSONNEL HERWALD H. MORTON
SPENT A WEEK IN GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH USIS
AND RSC HERE IN MANILA AND WITH THE ENTIRE VOA STAFF AT TINANG.
HE ANSWERED ANY NUMBER OF QUESTIONS REGARDING REORGANIZATION, OPEN
ASSIGNMENTS, AND THE WASHINGTON SCENE GENERALLY IN ADDITION TO
DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS AMONG BOTH AMERICAN AND
NATIONAL EMPLOYEES.

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